

Stavrogin: The Double or Nothing

"If Stavrogin has faith, he does not believe that he has faith. If he hasn't faith, he does not believe that he hasn't."

-- Fyodor Dostoyevsky: The Possessed

If opposites attract that could explain the kinship that I feel, but I'm not sure they do. I could never look into the muzzle of a pistol and let some irate fool take three shots at me without a nervous breakdown, return of fire, or headlong dash like Danny Kaye behind an oak. I could never marry a cripple or even someone with a warty nose for self sacrifice or money let alone a whim.

And, needless to say, I could never hang myself without the trembles and the fear of pain and death and maybe God. But you knew Kirilov's forty tons of rock could only crush, not hurt. Not me.

I'm afraid you're what Satan's all about, a heart that pumps at always the same speed and only blood.

I don't have your strength;

I can't twist an arm.

But I can stand aside, like you, and watch myself manipulate affections.

Then aware of seeming too much mind

I'll retreat and wear my heart upon a sleeve yet always careful

it doesn't get a bump or bruise.

I'd like to give but usually can't.

At least they thought you were possessed which means something had you in its power.

The joke was

that something else was always you.

The horror is

I don't seem mad.

I've got all the fear you never had but it's all centered on myself.

The reason I'm afraid we are alike: the only thing that matters is my song.